

## **AGENDA ITEM #10 – TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER**

### **ISU DIRECTOR**

Excellencies, dear friends,

It is an honour that Ambassador Delmi has asked that I participate in this panel, with the purpose of my participation to review the evolution of the Convention's cooperation and assistance machinery since the Cartagena Summit.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Susan Eckey of Norway, the States Parties placed a heavy emphasis on Cooperation and Assistance at the 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World.

Of the Cartagena Action Plan's 67 Actions, 19 were dedicated to international cooperation and assistance for achieving the Convention's aims.

One of these actions – Action #48 – saw the States Parties commit to “ensure that the Convention and its informal mechanisms include and provide a specific and effective framework for identifying needs and mobilising national and international resources to meet these needs.”

In pursuing the commitment made by the States Parties through Action #48, the Coordinating Committee agreed in 2010 that the President would convene a special session on cooperation and assistance during the June 2010 intersessional work programme.

In convening this session, Ambassador Eckey Norway indicated that “while some in Cartagena advocated the establishment of a new Standing Committee to devote itself to cooperation and assistance,” her hope was not at that stage debate the pros and cons of establishing such a body but rather use the session “to identify key issues and questions on how to strengthen and improve international assistance and cooperation for Article 5 implementation, victim assistance and other relevant matters – in accordance with the Cartagena Action Plan.”

She noted that, as such, “the informal session could be an important test for how cooperation and assistance could be handled either by a new Standing Committee or through other means.”

The 2010 special session on cooperation and assistance was significant for at least two reasons:

- First: It clarified that the States Parties need to have two distinct discussions – one that concerns Article 5 implementation and one that concerns victim assistance. As Ambassador Eckey of Norway noted in 2010: “While both matters belong to the larger family of mine action, mine clearance and victim assistance, these issues have different timelines, involve distinct national and international actors and relate to different national institutional and regulatory frameworks and budget lines.”

Ambassador Eckey went on to say, particularly as concerns victim assistance: “It may even be that the whole notion of mine action as an integrated field of practice has hampered attempts to utilise available resources in the most effective manner.”

- Second: The 2010 special session was significant because it laid out two fairly rich agendas or suggested programmes of work for cooperation and assistance – one which concerns Article 5 and one which concerns victim assistance – which could be followed-up on by the States Parties.

I would maintain that these suggested work programmes, which were contained in two papers presented by the President in 2010 and which can be found on the Convention’s web site, remain important.

Also in 2010, the Cartagena Summit President, Ambassador Eckey of Norway, led an exhaustive evaluation of the functioning of the Intersessional Work Programme.

In her report to the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the Coordinating Committee, Ambassador Eckey wrote that “given the successful manner in which cooperation and assistance was dealt with during the 2010 Intersessional Work Programme, the Coordinating Committee noted the value of intensifying a focus on cooperation and assistance.”

Ambassador Eckey’s report went to say that “the Coordinating Committee in particular considered

favourably a proposal made by Zambia to establish a new Standing Committee”, noting “that the purpose of such a Standing Committee would be to serve as a forum to exchange information and views, and share ideas, on:

(a) ensuring adequate and predictable levels of human, technical and financial support for the implementation of the Convention on the part of both States Parties implementing the Convention and from other States Parties and other sources, and,

(b) the efficient and effective use of resources.”

The report further noted that “such a Standing Committee, like other mechanisms established by the States Parties, would be supported by the ISU.”

The 10MSP agreed with the Zambian proposal to establish the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance.

I would credit those States Parties that have served as Co-Chairs – Albania, Thailand and Ecuador – with following up on the original suggested areas of work which had been tabled by Ambassador Eckey.

These Co-Chairs placed on the agenda of meetings of the Standing Committee follow up on matters such as the role of various trust funds to support implementation, the importance of partnerships, and coordination, the need for efficient use of resources, and the exchange of information to support cooperation and assistance.

With respect to the this exchange of information, at the 11MSP, Thailand – as incoming Co-Chair – highlighted that as assistance in terms of financial support is very much needed, other types of assistance – such as technical know-how, sharing of best practices, the availability of expertise, the provision of equipment, et cetera – are also essential.

Thailand further suggested that the States Parties could explore establishing a mechanism to make information on these types of assistance available and to house contact information.

To seek views and advice on this matter, in 2012 the Co-Chairs convened a small group session during the Intersessional Work Programme.

The result was the request by the Co-Chairs that the ISU establish, in a simple and cost effective manner, a *platform for partnerships* information exchange tool.

The Co-Chairs subsequently invited all States Parties to submit information that could be shared using this information exchange tool and the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties “welcomed the initiative of the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance in developing, on a trial basis, an information exchange tool on assistance available to support the implementation of the Convention and encouraged States Parties to make use of this tool.”

This tool is incorporated into the Convention’s website and to date nine States Parties have furnished information.

At the end of this year, the ISU will provide statistics to the Co-Chairs on visits to relevant website in order to better inform decisions they may wish to take on where to next with respect to the *platform for partnerships*.

It should be noted that since the Cartagena Summit, Co-Chairs have taken the initiative to stage, on voluntary basis, activities to advance the Convention’s cooperation and assistance agenda.

In 2011, Albania, with financial support provided by Norway, convened the Tirana symposium on cooperation in the pursuit of the victim assistance aim of the Convention.

And in June of this year, Thailand, in collaboration with Ecuador and with financial support provided by Australia convened the Bangkok Symposium, which we will hear more about during a subsequent discussion.

I would observe these events have been useful complements to discussions on cooperation and assistance that have taken place in the context of meetings of the Standing Committees and meetings of the States Parties.

To conclude, please allow me share a few more observations:

First: It is clearly understood that cooperation and assistance amounts to both important rights and obligations under the Convention and the heart and soul of the Convention.

Second: While the importance of the topic of cooperation assistance is well understood, different delegations have different expectations when it comes to discussion cooperation and assistance:

- Some value most the opportunity to make conceptual advances; other see it as a key opportunity to express needs; others consider it a platform to highlight their financial or other contributions to the implementation of the Convention.
- Addressing diverse expectations presents a challenge for those States Parties that lead or convene cooperation and assistance discussions.

Third: I would observe that the States Parties adopted an important conclusion in the final documentation of the Cartagena Summit when they formally defined what national ownership means to them and when they highlighted how significant this is when it comes to facilitating and enhancing cooperation and assistance.

Perhaps there is scope for the States Parties to use their meeting time on cooperation and assistance to further explore the application of this understanding.